

Editor/President

Dr Mark Ferson
4 Sofala Ave
Riverview NSW 2066
0401 141 890
m.ferson@unsw.edu.au

Secretary

Bronwyn Vost
bronwynvost@bigpond.com

Designer

Mary Keep
mary.keep@gmail.com



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Imaginary portraits: Gutenberg

By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

Germans have, for an Australian sensibility anyway, quite a unique engagement with science and technology. It is not just about invention and application as a way to start a business and make a living. This interest in science and technology seems to me at least to be something akin to how we here might look upon areas such as fine art, the ballet or classical music. Yes, for Germans science and technology is part of the canon of the fine arts — with all the passion and enthusiasm that this entails. I was recently in Germany where I visited four printing museums to which I had not been before. This inspired me to try and compile a comprehensive list of printing museums in Germany — printing as in printing, paper, type. But the experts also include as printing museums things such as museums of the book as well as museums of related products such as a museum of wallpaper. As well as letterpress printing workshops open to the public. My draft list now stands at ninety-two!

Johannes Gutenberg (1400-68) is one of the great names from history. Up there in the pantheon of instantly recognized brand names populated by the likes of Marx, Napoleon and, dare I say, Coca Cola! Brand Gutenberg. Despite the passage of time and a paucity of records, over several centuries we have pieced together much of his life. But mysteries remain. Gutenberg is not only the most famous son of Mainz, he has connections with the nearby Eltville am Rhein but also Strasbourg. Did Gutenberg print a work in Strasbourg before the great Bible, as some think?

The greatest mystery of all, however, is, what Gutenberg looked like. The Gutenberg exhibition in the tower museum of the castle in Eltville am Rhein is unusual in that a large part of it is comprised of originals of depictions

of Gutenberg from history. This includes what some might uncharitably call those brightly coloured Gutenberg artist's garden gnomes! While there are no actual portraits of Gutenberg available, there have been dozens if not hundreds of imagined portraits which have appeared in the pages of books, as statues in countless town squares throughout Europe, in the pages of graphic novels, on the facades of buildings but also on bookplates.

The only Australian bookplate known to me on the subject of printing (printing, paper, type) is John Gartner's famous bookplate featuring the well-known image of him as the solid and confident burgher of Mainz. I am sure there are others. This bookplate is a wood engraving by the Australian printmaker and art teacher,



Wood engraving by Allan Jordan for John Gartner, 1950

Allan Jordan, dated 1950. Gartner was one of Australia's significant book collectors who started his publishing business as a private press, the Hawthorn Press (1936) and was the 'mover' behind the Melbourne-based Australian Bookplate Club (1942-44).

Pamphlets are a fascination of mine — especially those on the subject of print. I am always looking for something new and unusual on any aspect of this very extensive subject. Found in a favourite antiquarian bookshop in Berlin, the following:

Schulze, Thomas. *Gutenberg-Exlibris* / Thomas Schulze. Leipzig : Taiga-Druck-Verlag, 2001. 20 p. : ill. (some col.), ports. (1 col.) ; 23 cm. (*Reihe Gutenberg-Bildnisse* ; Heft 1).

The above work would seem to be the first in a planned series of publications on Gutenberg: an illustrated survey of Gutenberg monuments, Gutenberg on postcards, Gutenberg on postage stamps and coins, Gutenberg portraits as used in book illustrations, as well as a sixth, on Gutenberg portraits in general. Thomas Schulze was the proprietor of the Taiga-Druck-Verlag printing and publishing house in Leipzig. And so, a printer with a deep interest in Gutenberg as well as having the facility to publish such works himself.

The bookplates featured in *Gutenberg-Exlibris* are largely traditional but include a number which are quite striking and quite modern in conception such as that for Dr Elke Schutt-Kehm of the Gutenberg Museum. She has been responsible for organizing the major collection of bookplates held by the Museum. Forty bookplates are illustrated giving the names of both the artist and the owner. Dimensions are provided as well as dates, where available, which range from 1906 to 2000. Reproduction processes are given for all, with the more modern produced by means of computer graphics. However, many other processes were used such as etching, aquatint, mezzotint, offset printing, woodcut and even a process called the lead-cut.

A check of the online catalogue of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (Ger., German National Library) in Leipzig retrieves only the above work. So, it would seem that

Schulze's plans to published further works in the series did unfortunately not bear fruit.

The bookplates of Fannie and De Burgh Persse of Wyambyn Station, Queensland

By Jon McGhee, South East Queensland

Bookplates present beguiling images: visual statements of possession that are also very personal self-reflections which allude to the identity or disposition of the owner. This is certainly evident in the bookplates belonging to Fannie Martin Persse and her husband De Burgh Bannatyne Bentinck Persse, of 'Wyambyn' station near Beaudesert, in south east Queensland. Each

was born into a prominent pioneering pastoral family, and experienced similar bush childhoods, but their choice of images to illustrate their bookplates could not be more different. One presents an ideal, a testament to a new and happy life and a passion for the Australian bush, the other has chosen imagery which harks back to an illustrious lineage and another continent.

Fannie Persse was born Fannie Martin Collins at 'Tamrookum' station, near Rathdowney in Queensland, on 9 June 1887, the fifth child of Robert Martin (remembered for his tireless efforts towards the establishment of Lamington National Park in south east Queensland) and Arabella Clotilde Collins. She was named Fannie after a close friend of her parents, Frances (Fanny) Kingsley, the English writer and widow of Charles Kingsley. After



Process bookplate, possibly by Nora Heysen, for Fannie Martin Persse, c. 1930s

completing her education at Kambala in Sydney, Fannie returned to 'Tamrookum'.

De Burgh B B Persse (often called Burgho) was born on 12 December 1881 at 'Tabragalba' station. His father, De Burgh Fitzpatrick Persse (1840-1921), was born in Moyode Castle, Galway, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he displayed great intellectual aptitude. At different times he acted as the high sheriff of Galway and Master of the Galway Hounds. After seven years on various Queensland pastoral properties, in 1871 De Burgh Fitzpatrick Persse married his cousin Mary Blair in Ireland, then returned to Australia to set up home at Tabragalba. De Burgh (the son) was educated at The Armidale School, after which he spent time travelling including several visits to Moyode Castle.

On 21 April 1909, Fannie Martin Collins and De Burgh Bannatyne Bentinck Persse married, an event which created

widespread interest. The original plan to hold the marriage ceremony at St Thomas' Church, Beaudesert, had to be cancelled due to rain, and the marriage service and subsequent celebrations took place instead at 'Tamrookum' station. The couple established a home on a parcel of land gifted to them; the new station was named 'Wyambyn' from a local, indigenous term meaning the home of the flying fox. 'Wyambyn' station provided an ideal location, surrounded by immediate family living at 'Mundoolun', 'Tabragalba' and 'Nindooibah'.

Fannie and De Burgh had six children; twin daughters followed by four sons. De Burgh continued to expand his grazing interests, this time using the newly registered Wyambyn cattle brand, in the shape of a grape leaf. He was gregarious, far sighted and an astute businessman, much like his father, leading to many senior directorships.

Horse breeding and racing were passions, and he attended regular meetings at various racetracks in Brisbane and Beaudesert.

Fannie maintained a keen interest in the language of the indigenous people of the district, especially in the correct pronunciation of the local Wangerriburra place names. While visiting Sydney in 1939, Fannie and her daughter, Mary Blair Persse visited the studio of Norah Heysen. Following several years of illness, Fannie Martin Persse died at Wyambyn on 24 February 1944. She was buried in the cemetery at All Saints' Memorial Church, Tamrookum. De Burgh died on 11 December 1947 and is buried at her side. Fannie, when describing the location, wrote '... a lovelier spot it would be hard to find; in consecrated ground at 'Tamrookum', overlooked by All Saints ...'.

The bookplates

The bookplate for Fannie Persse presents a very appealing composition. It is believed that the design was commissioned in 1939 from Nora Heysen, during the visit to Heysen's Sydney studio by Fannie and her daughter Mary Blair Persse, described earlier.

The tree which inspired the composition is said to be a Queensland blue gum, *Eucalyptus tereticornis*. It stood on a river flat almost equidistant from the homesteads at 'Nindooibah' and 'Wyambyn' stations. This flat, close to the Albert River, was popular with the Persse and Collins families who used it for horse riding parties and picnics. The area was subsequently called 'The racecourse', a title which remains in use to this day. The tree was eventually struck by lightning and destroyed.

The image and text are enclosed within a framework of intertwining eucalyptus leaves, edged with blossoms and gumnuts. The focus on the already prominent, massive trunk has been further strengthened by being highlighted, a technique which emulates the bright, penetrating sunlight typical of this open forest terrain. Especially charming is the clever use of tone and texture in fashioning the leaves, which subtly suggests movement, and so the clusters of leaves appear to be tossing



Bookplate for De Burgh Bannatyne Bentinck Persse

about in the wind. The artist has skilfully captured the scribbly untidiness of these trees. Their trunks, hung with peeling bark, are essentially asymmetrical, leaning off in directions to this way and that.

There is no evidence of European inspired orderliness in this composition, rather a representation of an ideal which is wonderfully free-spirited and uniquely Australian.

Quite distinct from Fannie's bookplate, that for De Burgh conforms to an old-world formality of structure with balance as a dominant element. The design suggests a social confidence regarding his perceptions of identity and lineage. The absence of a name is unusual in this context: perhaps he is relying upon the strength of imagery alone to indicate identity, and subsequently the mark of his property. The motif is masculine, downright and unequivocal and illustrates a fascinating heritage. The design references heraldic symbols of the Percy family, and Stephen Szabo, Secretary of the Australian Heraldry Society, suggests the likelihood that this device was created for De Burgh Persse, or an ancestor, by a heraldic stationer in a fashion which, while alluding to the illustrious Percy family, does not actually usurp their coat of arms in any fashion.

The belt (or fess) presented *in annulo* is a common element in early Percy badges. This method of enclosing the design within a buckled and knotted military belt, with an end pendant, is used frequently as it is a symbol of allegiance rather than entitlement and thus provides an opportunity for non-armigerous descendants to legally incorporate heraldic symbolism. Generally considered to have evolved from ancient war cries, mottoes, used in conjunction with a badge became popular during the Middle Ages. In this instance, the Percy family motto *Esperance en Dieu* ('Hope in God') is encased within the roundel.

The crescent, usually associated with cadence, correctly places De Burgh Persse as the second son, but it also appears in the stamp of Henry Percy, 9th Earl of Northumberland towards the end of the sixteenth century. Two sets of symbolic braces or fetterlocks are cupped within the

upturned horns of the crescent. They also appear in the stamps of Algernon Percy, 4th Duke of Northumberland during the early 1800s, are stylized double bolts, and made to resemble a swivel. The shamrocks, without doubt, provide a symbolic tribute and deference to De Burgh Persse's Irish ancestry, the Burgh family of Galway.

The movement in Australian cricket bookplates

By Ronald L Cardwell, Sydney

Bookplates for many collectors are a mark of their commitment and, might I say defining moment, in collecting a book. For the purist, placing a bookplate neatly into one's book can become somewhat of an obsession if you take it to the level of thematic designs and having it reflective of the books one is collecting.

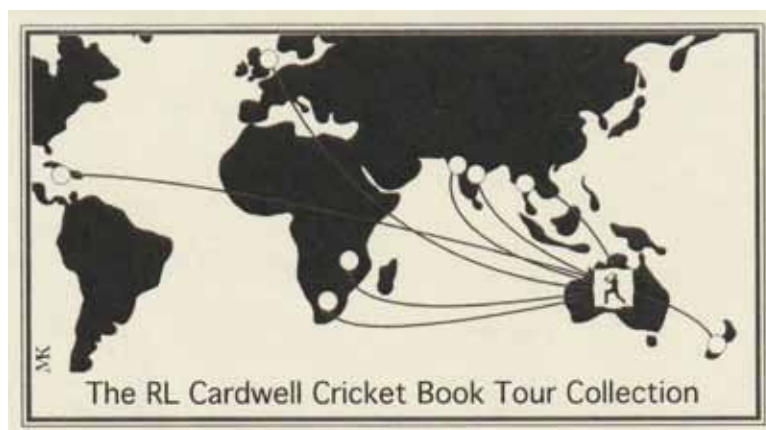
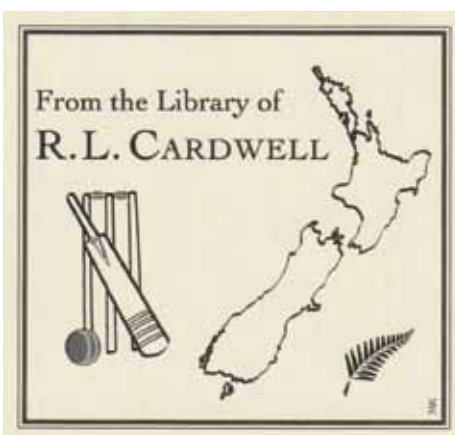
In 2008 a book was written by David Rayvern Allen titled *With the bookplate of A E Winder*. The book told the story of a Yorkshire businessman and fanatical collector of cricket books and cricketiana. It detailed how his bookplate came into being and his reasoning in placing bookplates in his books, notwithstanding that many of his books had been owned by the noted cricket writer and broadcaster John Arlott.

Over the years there have been a few Australian cricketers who have collected books and their books have included a cricket bookplate. Unfortunately, those bookplates were placed in the books only when they were being donated to the

library that acquired them. Garnsey was the only player who took the art seriously and had Norman Lindsay take pen to paper to depict a suitable bookplate.

Since that time very few cricket bookplates have found their way into the cricket books of Australian cricket book collectors. The Melbourne Cricket Club Library adopted a unique action when significant cricket book collections were donated to their world recognised cricket library. With collections being bequeathed to them by Sir Robert Menzies, Clarrie Grimmett and others, the library designed bookplates for inclusion in the books. Whilst not outstanding in design they at least recognise the collection where the books have originated.

Brisbane lawyer Patrick Mullins was perhaps the biggest cricket book collector in Australia until the late 1980s. He designed a unique Queensland bookplate in the mid-1960s for inclusion in his books. When his collection was purchased by the Melbourne Cricket Club in the later years of his life, they had a provenance as evidenced by his bookplate. Very few books from his



Computer aided bookplate designs by Mary Keep for Ronald Cardwell, (NZ) 2012; (world tour) 2019

collection were ever sold, meaning that his bookplate is somewhat hard to obtain by a collector. This writer, who was friends with the Queensland bibliophile, has several of his books and individual bookplates in his collection.

The former first-class cricket umpire Arthur Watson who holds a modest collection of cricket books has seen fit to create an umpiring bookplate that is in each of his books. Whenever he secures the signature of a cricket identity, according to Watson they always comment on his bookplate.

There are perhaps 50-60 serious Australian cricket book collectors in Australia. What we mean by 'serious' are those collectors with upwards of 1,000 cricket books in their libraries. The biggest collection in Australia is owned by Peter Brady. The former cricketer, now an accountant, has amassed a collection that accounts for in excess of 10,000 cricket books. With a strong leaning to Australian cricket books the collection has over 2,000 with cricket bookplates inside the front cover. Recently Brady said, 'it is a huge undertaking to ensure that the books are catalogued and each has inside its cover a bookplate reflective of the book's theme'.

Last year Brady acquired a unique collection of cricket books from a well-known identity in the world of literature. The books had in them ephemeral items such as photos, autographs and letters. Brady has decided that the books will remain as a collection and will have within their covers a bookplate that supports the collection and the original owner of the books.

This writer in taking a lead from Brady has sought bookplates designed and produced that fit the theme of the books in his collection. The New Zealand cricket collection has a map of New Zealand and a fern with a cricket bat, ball and stumps. The collection of books pertaining to cricket tours around the world shows a map of the world with the centres noted where tours have been undertaken. When it comes to old books prior to 1915 an older style of crossed bats, stumps and ball is depicted.

With other areas, biographies, reference

and history further thought will be given to properly recording each theme in the form of a different bookplate. One of the disappointing aspects in collecting cricket books is that very few of the collectors have seen fit to have cricket bookplates designed and inserted in their books. Recently the Bradman Museum was given a collection in excess of 1500 books. The owner of the books, Graham Evans, had neatly inscribed his name in each book, possibly a bookplate. As the Honorary Librarian at the Bradman Museum, I was able to have a bookplate designed that reflected the identity of the donor. The bookplate was inserted into the books with an accompanying catalogue also produced in book form.

One of the issues in sporting books, and other themed books, is that end papers are specially designed to complement the book and in other instances have cricket advertisements. Affixing the bookplate in the book is a challenge to ensure the book does not lose any of its worth by the placement of a bookplate that compromises the condition and quality of the book.

Yes, cricket bookplates are evolving as part of one's cricket library, but the movement is slow.

President's report to the Twelfth Annual General Meeting

The Twelfth Annual General Meeting, held on 25 June 2019 at the Ultimo rooms of Sydney Rare Book Auctions, will be covered in detail in the next issue of the *Newsletter*. Following the transacting of the official business of the Society, those present had the pleasure of hearing Canberra historian Pam Lane deliver a talk, accompanied by numerous illustrations, on her forthcoming book on the life and work of Eirene Mort. An insert is included with this *Newsletter* which summarises Pam's fascinating talk. The text of the President's report for 2018 is printed below.

The Report

The year for the Society was marked by involvement in more bookplate events,

likely because we are networking with like-minded groups and word is just spreading about the Society. The most unexpected and spectacular of these events was, of course, the donation in April of the substantial bookplate collection of Australian artist and bookplate designer Eirene Mort, by her family. This was the result of the connections and work of the Society's Honorary Secretary, Bronwyn Vost, and parts of the story have been told by Bronwyn in *Newsletter* no. 50 and at last year's AGM; indeed we are grateful to Bronwyn for arranging today's guest speaker, Pam Lane, who will tell us about Eirene Mort's life and work, and I am very much looking forward to hearing Pam's talk.

It was great to have been invited to speak about bookplates during the year: at the Adrian Feint Study Day held on 12 May at Adelaide's Carrick Hill, on 'The history of Australian bookplate design'; and at a joint workshop with printmaker Dianne Longley 'The secrets of bookplates' at Paper Contemporary 2018, held at Sydney's Carriageworks on 16 September, kindly organised by member Akky Van Ogtrop, President of the Print Council of Australia. Of course I took every opportunity to promote the Society on these occasions.

One of the amazing results of our informal networks and the existence of the Society's website (which could always do with more work and a few more volunteers...) is that we receive some really interesting enquiries from people. And to keep a good record of these I set up



Pam Lane and Nick Ingleton discuss Eirene Mort at the Society's AGM, 25 June 2019.

a special folder in my email program. Enquiries received during 2018 sought advice on how to find someone to design a bookplate, how best to stick bookplates into books, information on Noel Pearson who owned a number of bookplates, and a query about who holds the copyright in GD Perrottet's bookplates.

Paid membership of the Society rose slightly to 72 (from 67 in 2017), of which 59 were for the hard copy *Newsletter* and 13 the digital membership. We sadly lost two members who died during the year, Glen Ross Ralph (1932-2018) and Ian Ronald Stubbin (1942-2018).

Our four issues of the *Newsletter* were well received, in particular no. 50 which celebrated several members — Jeff Bidgood, Lis Bastian and Mary Keep — who have made great contributions to the Society. I

wish to thank Mary Keep for her always excellent design of our publications, and to express my gratitude to *Newsletter* contributors Pamela Horsnell (Sydney), Debra Parry (Melbourne), Jürgen Wegner (Sydney), Andrew Peake (Adelaide), Ian Thwaites (Auckland), Bronwyn Vost (Sydney), Jan Taylor (Sydney) and Dr Michael Taffe (Ballarat).

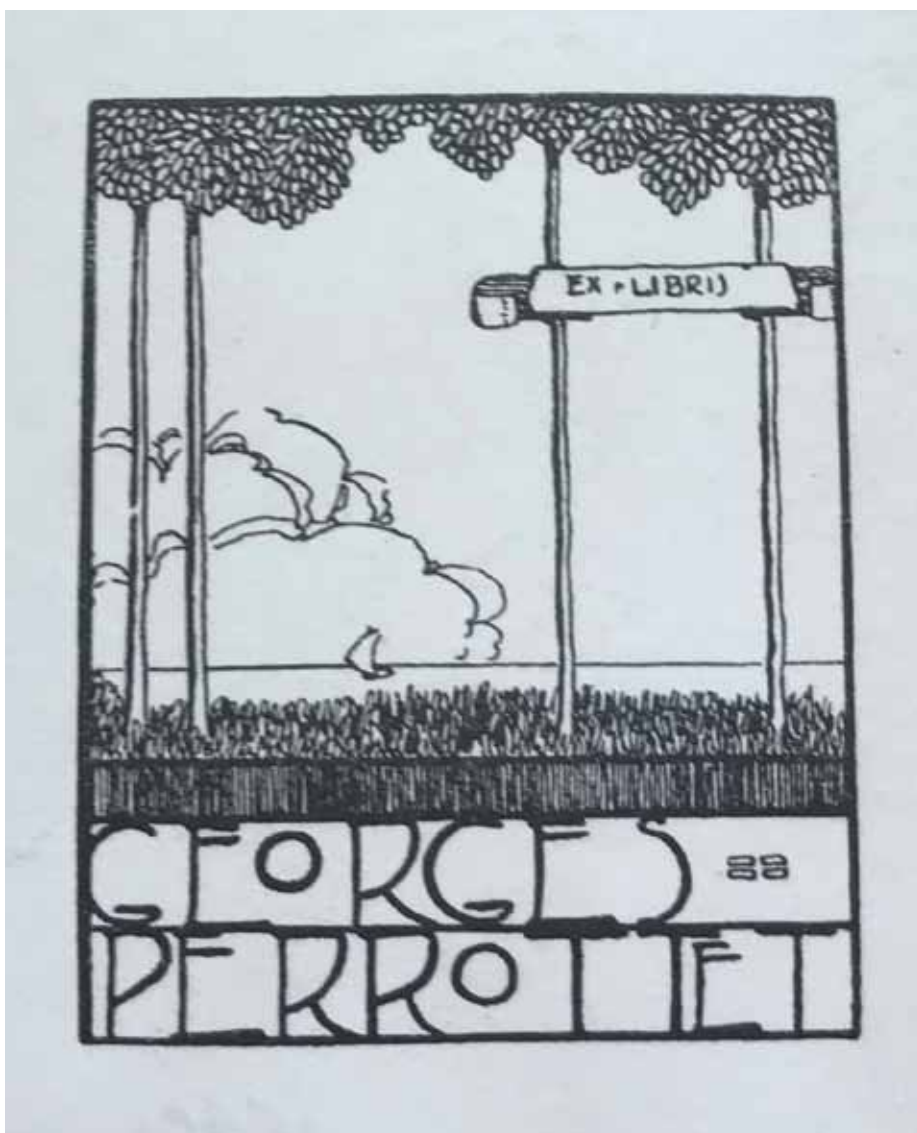
My thanks also go to Bronwyn for organising today's AGM and for arranging the social media workshop to be led by Zora Regulic in coming weeks, and to the Society executive and committee, Ronald Cardwell and Nick Ingleton, for their support of the Society and my work.

Finally, I thank Paul Feain for once again agreeing to host our AGM and for providing the wonderful, welcoming atmosphere that we find at Sydney Rare Book Auctions.

Auction report: Sydney Rare Book Auctions, Ultimo, 6 April 2019

Bookplates do come up in book auctions from time to time, but this auction was remarkable for the sale of a significant Australian bookplate collection and other interesting bookplate-related items. The collection, lot 116, was that of well known book collector, and Sydney pathologist, Dr Kaz Posney (1924-88). He was in touch with other bookplate collectors and in the 1970s and 1980s commissioned a large number of bookplates, often somewhat erotic in nature, primarily from European artists. The auction catalogue provides extensive detail about the composition of lot 116 as follows:

Nine albums of Bookplates, lovingly compiled (I think by Kaz Posney). Purchased by our vendor at a Sotheby's sale on 28/8/89. The first volume starts with a number of Institutional labels and bookplates such as Sydney University, Melbourne University, Sydney Grammar School and The Red Cross Society. Then it moves onto Australian plates. Many of the plates have printed or handwritten notes on the artist or owner of the plate. An interesting early example is the embossed stamp of Cec Rowlandson of NSW Bookstall fame. Other notables in this volume are James R Tyrrell, George Barrington (surely not the Australian convict Barrington), early Australian doctors George Bennett and William Bland. Other early ones are Barron Field, James Macarthur Onslow, a Mitchell Library bookplate with an accompanying letter dated 1955 from the Mitchell Librarian. Plates from David Scott Mitchell, William Dixon, John Oxley, Julian Tennison Woods, John Gartner, Edwin Jewell, Kaz Posney, Harry Muir, Keith Wingrove, Percy Neville Barnett, John Lane Mullins. It's like name dropping of interesting characters in Australian ex libris history. There is a small section on plates designed for Australians by Japanese artists. There are numerous etched, woodblock, linocut, silkprint



A little known early pen and ink design by G D Perrottet for himself, 1920s.

bookplates and many coloured samples and numerous signed samples. The second volume is dedicated to Adrian Feint with nearly 200 samples of his work which is arranged in chronological order. Many of these are original etchings and many are signed and a number are coloured. It's magnificent. The third volume has a number of good things including an original etching (not a bookplate) by Donald Friend, signed and numbered 8/15, an etched bookplate for Nellie Melba by Cyril Dillon, many signed plates by L Roy Davies including one for Douglas Mawson. The fourth volume continues with Sir Lionel Lindsay well represented with original etchings and more. His sister, Ruby, is represented with a very rare sample. Raymond Lindsay is also here as is Sydney Long. Volume 5 has Eirene Mort, Mirka Mora, Syd Nicholls, Pixie O'Harris, the cricketer Arthur Mailey, Neville Barnett, Raymond McGrath. Volume 6 is devoted to George Perrottet and must surely be a complete collection of his bookplate work. Volume 7 continues with DH Souter, Irena Sibley (2 original signed Lino cuts one 4/20 and the other 7/20), Gayfield Shaw, Tom Roberts, Eric Thake, Percy Spence, Sydney Ure Smith and more. Volume 8 has many 'no-name' artists represented although there is an original Christian Waller woodcut here as well as many other fine samples of Australian bookplate art. The last volume is devoted to New Zealand plates. I do not know these artists but the standard is just as good. Strangely Norman Lindsay is not represented. This is a wonderful archive of Australian and New Zealand bookplates with more than 1000 plates including many original pieces of art. Forms a unique history of the bookplate in Australia.

Lot 116 went for a hammer price of \$7,600 — surely a bargain for such a comprehensive collection of Australian bookplates (despite a lack of Norman Lindsay designs) with

many original prints among them. Other items included booklets published by the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers, Australian Ex Libris Society, Barnett, Feint, the NSW Bookplate Club and Wakefield Press, and separate Feint material including bookplates and proof drawings for his illustrations to books published by the Australian Limited Editions Society. But the mouth watering item was without doubt the Pozney collection, and it is my hope that we might convince the new owner to come forward and 'show and tell' one day!

Further reading

'Kazimierz Posney', in, Charles Stitz (ed.), *Australian Book Collectors V*. Melbourne: Books of Kells, 2010; pp. 459-61

Notes and happenings

Publications

ELDRIDGE, KAREN. Century-old book prize. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29-30 Jun. 2019, 'Spectrum' p. 28

The unusual appearance in this section of the paper of a bookplate, in this case a prize plate found in a copy of *The vicar of Wakefield* awarded to Albert Maher by Sydney City Mission Sunday School, Feb. 1911; the writer is 'seeking people with a connection to this particular book.'

HANCOCK, JOELIE. The wonderful world of mechanics' institutes. South Australia. Port Adelaide Institute (est. 1836). *Useful Knowledge* (magazine of the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc.), no. 49, Autumn/Winter 2019, pp. 24-6

Reproduces the pictorial bookplate used by the Port Adelaide Institute from 1959 to January 1979

O'NEILL, VIVIENNE. 'Reading and writing', in *Carter's Yesterday's paper. Collecting ephemera in Australia*. Sydney: John Furphy Pty Ltd, 2007; pp. 140-50

Brief section on bookplates with images of bookplates by Lionel Lindsay, Norman Lindsay and Edith Renton, and unsigned armorials for Henry Ayers CMG and H M Watson.

Editorial

This number of the *Newsletter* contains what I hope are an interesting variety of articles of bookplate significance. Librarian and passionate recorder of all things related to the printing industry, Jürgen Wegner, uses a modern bookplate to highlight the lack of surviving portraits of Johannes Gutenberg. It is always pleasing to discover or have brought to notice previously unrecorded bookplates — and I have previously observed that there must have been a very large number of bookplates produced when it was charming or fashionable to do so but which have not appeared in the known collections and hence have not been captured. And so I am very grateful to Jon McGhee who, in drafting the story of two Perse bookplates, ended up writing an article of family/bookplate history 'in return for' contacting the Society to ask a completely unrelated question about the maker of a linocut he had (and to which I have not yet come up with an answer). Ronald Cardwell has kindly provided a version of his talk to the 2018 Annual General Meeting on cricketing bookplates; Ronald is clearly turning words to action, and is encouraging contemporary cricket book collectors (whether individual or institutional) to use bookplates and setting the example with his own bookplate commissions. Speaking of Annual General Meetings, I have included in this number my President's report for 2018, which I gave to the recent Annual General Meeting, as a summary of the various areas of the Society's work. The formal Minutes will be reproduced in a future issue but I can record that those present certainly found the talk by historian Pam Lane on Eirene Mort to be a wonderful overview of the life and work of this fascinating artist (who made an early and major contribution to the art of the pictorial bookplate in this country). Pam has generously allowed us to include her summary entitled 'Eirene Mort: Artist, Artisan and New Woman' as an insert in this *Newsletter*. You will no doubt wish to learn more about Eirene Mort and we hope that Pam finds a publisher for her book on this important but neglected artist. **MF**



The bookplates of Mirka Mora

In 1974, Melbourne artist Mirka Mora was commissioned by Rustic Gallery, of Bourke Street, Melbourne, to design a poster for a combined exhibition of 'Polish Contemporary Ex Libris and Book Plates by Norman Lindsay'. Mirka was so enthusiastic about this project that many ex libris for her Polish friends followed. Some of these Mirka hand-painted, others were coloured by the gallerist's daughter Edith Birnberg, then a teenager and later a student of Mirka's painting and doll making courses at the Melbourne Council for Adult Education.

A year later Mirka designed another bookplate-related poster, this time for an exhibition of 'Polish Books & Book Plates' organised by the Department of Slavonic Languages at the Australian National University, and held at the University Library; and then, last but not least, Mirka made an ex libris for herself.

Mirka's Polish ex libris will be displayed during the exhibition 'Mirka Mora: The Teacher' being organised by CAE and held from 31 July to 22 August 2019 in the City Library Gallery, 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

Above: Reproduction of hand-drawn and painted bookplate by Mirka Mora for Marzena Birnberg, 1974